

COUNTY BOROUGH OF BLAENAU GWENT

REPORT TO: THE LEADER AND MEMBERS OF THE EXECUTIVE

SUBJECT: EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE – 15th DECEMBER, 2021

REPORT OF: DEMOCRATIC & COMMITTEE SUPPORT OFFICER

**PRESENT: Leader of the Council/
Executive Member – Corporate Services
Councillor N. Daniels**

**Deputy Leader/Executive Member –
Regeneration & Economic Development
Councillor D. Davies**

**Executive Member – Education
Councillor J. Collins**

**Executive Member – Environment
Councillor J. Wilkins**

**WITH: Managing Director
Corporate Director Regeneration and Community Services
Corporate Director Education
Chief Officer Customer and Commercial
Service Manager Accountancy
Head of Children’s Services
Head of Legal and Corporate Compliance
Press Officer**

DECISIONS UNDER DELEGATED POWERS

<u>ITEM</u>	<u>SUBJECT</u>
No. 1	<u>SIMULTANEOUS TRANSLATION</u> It was noted that no requests had been received for the simultaneous translation service.

No. 2	<u>APOLOGIES</u> The following apologies for absence were received:- Councillor J. Mason, Executive Member – Social Services Corporate Director Social Services Chief Officer Resources
No. 3	<u>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS</u> There were no declarations of interest and dispensations raised.
	<u>MINUTES</u>
No. 4	<u>EXECUTIVE</u> Consideration was given to the minutes of the meeting held on the 10 th November, 2021. RESOLVED that the minutes be accepted as a true record of proceedings.
	<u>DECISION ITEMS – CORPORATE SERVICES</u>
No. 5	<u>FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME – 19th JANUARY, 2022</u> Consideration was given to the report of the Leader of the Council. RESOLVED that the Forward Work Programme be accepted and the information contained therein be noted (Option 1).

GRANTS TO ORGANISATIONS

Consideration was given to the report of the Chief Officer Resources.

The following additional grants were received since the publication of the report:-

ABERTILLERY**Abertillery Ward - Councillor N. Daniels**

1.	Six Bells Bowls Club	£100
2.	Abertillery Excelsiors FC	£50
3.	Abertillery Bluebirds FC	£50
4.	Ebenezer Baptist Church	£47.18

Cwmtillery Ward - Councillor J. Wilkins

1.	Abertillery Town Band	£50
2.	BGfm	£50
3.	Brynmawr Rotary	£100
4.	Chillax	£101.75
5.	Penybont Crafters	£100

Llanhilleth Ward - Councillor J. Collins

1.	Llanhilleth Tenants and Residents Association	£266.75
2.	Friend of St. Illtyds Primary School	£300

BRYNMAWR**Brynmawr Ward - Councillor J. Hill**

1.	Falcons Martial Arts	£100
2.	Friends of Parc Nant y Waun	£150
3.	BGfm	£150

EBBW VALE**Badminton Ward - Councillor G. Paulsen**

1.	Ebbw Vale University of the Third Age	£50
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Badminton Ward - Councillor C. Meredith

1. Ebbw Vale University of the Third Age £50

NANTYGLO & BLAINA

Nantyglo Ward - Councillor J. Mason & K. Rowson

1. Friends of Parc Nant y Waun £100

Blaina Ward - Councillor J. P. Morgan

1. Cwmcelyn Methodist Church £150
2. Cwmcelyn Angling Club £150
3. Blaina Scouts £150

TREDEGAR

Georgetown and Central West Wards - Councillor S. Thomas, H. Trollope, B. Willis, K. Hayden & J. Morgan

1. Cymru Creations £200
2. 2167 Air Force Cadets £200
3. Bedwellty Park Bowls Club £200
4. Chloe's Community Cupboard £200
5. Gymfinity £200
6. Kids r Us £200
7. Mother & Toddler Group Tredegar Central Baptist £200
8. St Georges Church £200
9. Silurian Amatuer Boxing Club £200
10. Tredegar Business Forum £200
11. Tredegar Central Baptist Church £200
12. Tredegar Methodist Church £200
13. Tredegar Netball £200
14. Tredegar Orpheus Choir £200
15. Tredegar Town AFC £200
16. Tredegar Women & Girls AFC £200
17. Tredvale Camera Club £200
18. Stocktonville Senior Citizens £200
19. Royal British Legion (Tredegar Branch) £175
20. Tredegar Angling Club £200
21. Blaenau Gwent Heritage Forum £200
22. St John's Ambulance Tredegar £200
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23.	Tredegar Ironsides RFC	£200
24.	Southend Allotments	£160
25.	Southend Bee Keepers	£160
26.	Sirhowy Valley Woodlands	£160
27.	St Georges Court Tenants & Residents Association	£160
28.	Saron Church	£200
29.	Friends of Bedwellty Park	£200
30.	Vale Terrace Tredegar Methodist Church	£200
31.	Planet Fitness	£150
32.	Tredegar Miners Memorial Gates	£202.85
33.	FC Tredegar Under 13's	£175
34.	FC Tredegar Under 14's	£175
35.	FC Tredegar Under 10's Tigers	£175
36.	Tredegar Ironsides Juniors RFC	£175
37.	Tredegar Town AFC Juniors	£150

Sirhowy Ward - Councillor T. Smith & M. Cross

1.	Royal British Legion (Tredegar Branch)	£116
2.	Tredegar Orpheus Choir	£50
3.	2167 Air Force Cadets	£50
4.	Tredegar Angling Club	£50
5.	Blaenau Gwent Heritage Forum	£50
6.	St John Cymru Wales	£50
7.	Tredegar Horse Show	£50
8.	Tredegar Ironsides RFC	£100
9.	Gwent Area Ass. of the Welsh Pony & Cob Society	£50
10.	Sirhowy Valley Woodlands	£50
11.	Nantybawch Community Centre	£250
12.	Sirhowy Community Centre	£250
13.	Ystrad Deri Community Centre	£250
14.	Horeb Chapel	£25
15.	Sardis Chapel	£25
16.	St George's Church	£50
17.	Silurian Boxing Club	£50
18.	Tredegar Netball Club	£50
19.	Tredegar Operatic Society	£50
20.	Tredegar Twinning Association	£100
21.	Glanhowy Primary (Autism) Journal Transfer	£100
22.	Sirhowy Flying Start (Planting) Journal Transfer	£50
23.	Trefil Junior RFC	£100

	<p>24. Ebenezer Welsh Congregational Church £50</p> <p>25. Immaculate Conception Church £50</p> <p>26. Tredegar Womens Institute £50</p> <p>27. Cymru Creations £50</p> <p>28. Valleys Life Afterstroke £50</p> <p>29. Brynbach Running Club £50</p> <p>30. Oak Football Club £50</p> <p>RESOLVED accordingly.</p> <p>FURTHER RESOLVED, subject to the foregoing that the report be accepted and the information contained therein be noted.</p>
<p>No. 7</p>	<p><u>MINUTES OF THE GRANTS WORKING GROUP</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the Minutes of the Grants Working Group held on 17th November, 2021.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the report be accepted and the information contained therein be noted.</p>
<p>No. 8</p>	<p><u>THE CALCULATION OF THE COUNCIL TAX BASE FOR THE YEAR 2022/23</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Chief Officer Resources.</p> <p>The Service Manager Accountancy advised that the report set out the Council Tax Base for the financial year 2022/23 and sought Executive approval. The Service Manager further spoke to the report and outlined the key points contained therein.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the report be accepted and the Executive Committee approved the Council Tax base calculation for 2022/23 as detailed in Appendix 1 tables 1 to 6, and that the council tax base for tax setting purposes be 20,876.86.</p>

DECISION ITEMS –
REGENERATION AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT MATTERS

No. 9 **EBBW VALE PLACEMAKING PLAN**

Consideration was given to the report of the Corporate Director Regeneration and Community Services.

The Corporate Director Regeneration and Community Services presented the report which sought approval of the Ebbw Vale Placemaking Plan. The Corporate Director reflected on the background of the Placemaking Plan and updated the work undertaken to date.

The Corporate Director further spoke to the report and noted the delivery of vision for Ebbw Vale Town and outlined the six core ambitions to deliver on the vision along with the areas of intervention and high level actions.

The Corporate Director referred to discussions undertaken in the Regeneration Scrutiny Committee and advised that all concerns were addressed.

The Executive Member for Regeneration and Economic Development advised that this was the first phase of the work to be undertaken and there was a great deal work to be taken forward in line with the delivery plan. The project would be developed across towns and work would be undertaken together which linked the whole of Blaenau Gwent. The Executive Member felt that there were a number of opportunities which could be explored from partnership works as well as funding avenues which could be explored.

The Executive Member added that it was important that as the Council took the Plan forward consideration was given to the sustainability of the development as it was paramount that projects are maintained into the future. The Executive Member advised that the Council had failed to ensure the sustainability of projects achieved in the past which had placed a great burden on budgets and left projects unmaintained.

The Leader concurred with the comments in relation to sustainability of projects and thanked the Corporate Director and Executive Member for their commitment which would benefit all our towns and be welcomed by elected Members and residents. The Leader looked forward to full roll out across the Borough.

RESOLVED that the report be accepted and the Ebbw Vale Placemaking Plan vision and core ambitions for the Future be agreed (Option 2).

No. 10 **REGIONAL APPROACH TO EMPLOYABILITY**

Consideration was given to the report of the Corporate Director Regeneration and Community Services.

The Corporate Director Regeneration and Community Services advised that the purpose of the report was to seek BGCBC endorsement of the regional paper and the principles of a locally delivered, regionally co-ordinated approach to employability. The Corporate Director noted that the European programmes would soon come to end across the region and added that the 10 Councils across the City Region region would be working together to deliver the employability provision.

The Corporate Director further spoke to the report and outlined the shared vision in terms of the Framework for Future Employability in the CCR. The Corporate Director advised that the paper had been brought forward by the 10 Councils across the region and was being considered by the respective Councils to be delivered locally within a regional framework. Once the support had been received a business case would be developed in terms of the need of the employability and monies would be allocated where required. The Corporate Director had hoped that a seamless transition could be undertaken from the old programme to the new process. It was noted that across the region 50,000 people had benefited therefore this was a significant piece of work to be undertaken and once the principle of the approach had been agreed then this would come back for Council sign off.

The Executive Member Regeneration and Economic Development felt it was important not to lose the local element and to learn from each other from a wider aspect. The Executive Member stated that he had always promoted skills and apprenticeships for young people and seeing the projects coming to fruition was fantastic. However, work was also needed with families and the older generation who may need to change career and look at new ways of working, therefore it was also important to upskill these individuals.

The Executive Member added that it was paramount that the Council are able to be proactive to these challenges and it was felt that the regional approach was the best way forward. It provided an opportunity to strengthen the initiatives already in place in Blaenau Gwent and provided that extra support particular in relation to the shared prosperity fund.

In response to discussions at the Regeneration Scrutiny Committee it was advised that there was support for local delivery and understood the need for the regional working.

RESOLVED that the report be accepted and the regional paper and the principle of a locally delivered be endorsed, regionally co-ordinated approach to employability (Option 1).

MONITORING ITEMS – CORPORATE SERVICES

No. 11 **COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY QUARTERLY
PERFORMANCE MONITORING (JULY - SEPTEMBER 2021)**

Consideration was given to the report of the Chief Officer Commercial and Customer.

RESOLVED that the report be accepted and quarter 2 (July to September 2021) update against the Communication Strategy be agreed (Option 1).

No. 12 **COMMERCIAL STRATEGY QUARTERLY
PERFORMANCE MONITORING (JULY - SEPTEMBER 2021)**

Consideration was given to the report of the Chief Officer Commercial and Customer.

The Leader noted the report which detailed the positive work undertaken and noted the work achieved with the Community Hubs. The Leader welcomed the creation of the Hubs by this administration. The figures had increased on a weekly basis and noted the case studies which highlighted the support these Hubs provided to residents. The Leader felt that if these Hubs had not been in place a huge number of people would have gone under the radar and would have needed to travel back and forth Ebbw Vale. The Leader was of the opinion that these Hubs would not have come about if the Council had not made the decision for alternative home working arrangements and decant from the Civic Centre.

The Leader continued that he had received positive feedback from residents and expressed thanks to the staff in the Community Hubs which he had visited with Councillor Collins.

RESOLVED that the report be accepted and the performance of the Commercial Strategy during Quarter 2 be noted as presented (Option 1).

No. 13 **REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING - 2021/2022,
FORECAST OUTTURN TO 31ST MARCH 2022
(AS AT 30TH SEPTEMBER 2021)**

Consideration was given to the report of the Chief Officer Resources.

The Service Manager Accountancy advised that the report provided Members with the forecast financial outturn position across all portfolios for the financial year 2021/2022 (as forecast at 30th September 2021).

The Service Manager noted the favourable position which placed the Council in a good position. The Executive Members were referred to the portfolio summary, budget virements and given an overview of the portfolio analysis. The Service Manager further spoke to the report and noted the appendices which provided greater detail to the information presented in the report.

The Leader welcomed the positive position of the budget and advised that the Minister for Local Government and Finance would shortly inform authorities of their budget settlements for 2022/2023. The Leader had hoped that a reasonable settlement would be received in order to continue the trend started in 2017.

The Leader expressed thanks to the Service Manager Accountancy and her Team for the work undertaken on behalf of the Authority.

RESOLVED that the report be accepted and the Executive Committee provided the appropriate challenge to the financial outcomes and virements as detailed in the report (Option 1).

No. 14 **CAPITAL BUDGET MONITORING,**
FORECAST FOR 2021/2022 FINANCIAL YEAR
(AS AT 30TH SEPTEMBER 2021)

Consideration was given to the report of the Chief Officer Resources.

The Service Manager Accountancy noted the report which provided an overview of each Portfolio's actual and forecast capital expenditure against funding approvals for the 2021/2022 financial year, as at 30th September 2021.

The Service Manager advised that the overall financial position as forecast at 30th September 2021 indicated an adverse variance of £283,128 against a total in year capital budget of £17.12m. It was reported that the adverse variance was due to overspends on the Household Waste Recycling Centre and Lime Avenue Business Park. It was added that discussions are ongoing with the relevant funding bodies as it was not proposed that monies be drawn down from the Council's contingency fund to address the overspends at this time.

The Service Manager further referred Members to the appendices which provided greater detail.

The Leader welcomed the report and current position.

	<p>RESOLVED that the report be accepted and</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• the appropriate challenge to the financial outcomes in the report was made;• the appropriate financial control procedures as agreed by Council was supported; and• the budgetary control and monitoring procedures in place within the Capital Team, to safeguard Authority funding be noted.
No. 15	<p><u>USE OF GENERAL AND EARMARKED RESERVES 2021/2022</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Chief Officer Resources.</p> <p>The Service Manager Accountancy spoke to the report and outlined the current position in relation to the forecast 2021/2022 as at Quarter 2.</p> <p>The Leader welcomed the current position of the Council's reserves and advised that in previous years the Authority had received criticism from the Audit Office Wales due to the poor management of the level of reserves. However, the Leader noted that the Authority had now increased the level of reserves which was due to the good work achieved in this area.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the report be accepted and the Executive Committee noted the following:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• the impact of the £2.814m favourable variance for 2021/2022 would have on the budgeted contribution to the General Reserve;• the forecast increase of the General Reserve in 2021/2022 to £10.567m, being 8.0% of net revenue expenditure, above the 4% target level;• the need for ongoing prudent financial management given the potential for future public spending restrictions required to fund the impact of Covid-19; and• the budget overspends continue to be challenged and the appropriate service Action Plans be implemented, where required.

No. 16	<u>BRIDGING THE GAP (BTG) PROGRAMME 2021/2022 – PROGRESS UPDATE JULY TO SEPTEMBER 2021</u>
	<p>Consideration was given to the report of the Chief Officer Resources.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the report be accepted and Members of the Executive Committee considered and approved the report and provided appropriate challenge to the Bridging the Gap programme (Option 1).</p>
No. 17	<u>PROGRESS REPORT CONTRACTS OVER £500K</u>
	<p>Consideration was given to the report of the Corporate Director Regeneration and Community Services.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the report be accepted and the information included within the report be noted as presented (Option 1).</p>
	<u>MONITORING ITEMS – ENVIRONMENT</u>
No. 18	<u>BIODIVERSITY AND ECOSYSTEM RESILIENCE FORWARD PLAN (2019-2022) 2020/21 ANNUAL REPORT</u>
	<p>Consideration was given to the report of the Corporate Director Regeneration and Community Services.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the report be accepted and the Executive approved the annual report 2020/21 and activity plan recommended for 2021/22 to meet the Section 6 Duty (Option 1).</p>
No. 19	<u>CIVIL PARKING ENFORCEMENT – SERVICE UPDATE</u>
	<p>Consideration was given to the report of the Corporate Director Regeneration and Community Services.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the report be accepted and the Executive noted the latest annual progress update relating to Civil Parking Enforcement (CPE) since its introduction in 2019 and the current business case model (Option 1).</p>

<p>No. 20</p>	<p><u>ANIMAL HEALTH, WELFARE & LICENSING SERVICE COLLABORATION – POWYS CC PARTNERSHIP – ACTIVITIES & UPDATE REPORT – OCTOBER 2021</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Corporate Director Regeneration and Community Services.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the report be accepted and the Executive Committee supported the work of the service going forward (Option 1).</p>
	<p><u>MONITORING ITEMS – REGENERATION AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT MATTERS</u></p>
<p>No. 21</p>	<p><u>ENERGY PROSPECTUS ANNUAL REVIEW</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Corporate Director Regeneration and Community Services.</p> <p>The Corporate Director Regeneration and Community Services advised that the report provided an update on progress for the last 12 months on the Energy Prospectus and emerging opportunities for the future. The Corporate Director noted that the energy priorities set by the Council had now started to be delivered upon and gave a comprehensive overview of activities which had been completed and emerging opportunities which linked into the efficiencies outlined in the Bridging the Gap Programme.</p> <p>The Executive Member for Regeneration and Economic Development advised that Blaenau Gwent was leading the way in terms of energy savings across authorities in Wales. The businesses were more efficient as energy was a major cost to businesses. The Executive Member noted that this was a ‘live’ document which would change accordingly as the Council go forward and it was hoped that it would allow our communities to participate.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the report be accepted and continued to support, promote and develop the projects within the energy prospectus and to ensure that the document was updated to reflect any additional projects that have emerged. The Executive Committee also agreed to continue to identify future projects that would meet the vision and objectives of the Council with respect to energy and decarbonisation (Option 2).</p>

No. 22 **NET ZERO REPORTING, CLIMATE ASSEMBLY
RESPONSE AND PROGRESSING TRANSITIONS**

Consideration was given to the report of the Managing Director.

The Managing Director spoke to the report and provided an overview of the response to Welsh Government's Net Zero reporting requirements. The Managing Director also noted the initial response to the Blaenau Gwent Climate Assembly report and asked the Executive to support the response. An overview of the progress on the Decarbonisation Plan transitions was provided and the Managing Director referred the Executive to the action plan as detailed in the appendices.

The Executive Member for Regeneration and Economic Development welcomed the report and the work being taken forward. The Executive Member referred to climate change and felt that any change was positive as the changes needed to be made. The change in the way people worked was now the normal practice and the reduction of the Council's assets was crucial in terms of achieving the Council's targets. The Climate Assembly was a key element and the response back was important to maintain that commitment from the public.

The Leader welcomed the report and stated that the plan submitted to the Assembly was in great detail and was a huge compliment to all concerned. The Leader felt that there could be no doubt to Blaenau Gwent's commitment.

RESOLVED that the report be accepted and the Executive Committee supported the response to the Climate Assembly (Option 1).

MONITORING ITEMS – EDUCATION

No. 23 **MANAGEMENT OF PUPIL PLACES AND THE
SCHOOL ESTATE 2020/21**

Consideration was given to the report of the Corporate Director Education.

RESOLVED that the report be accepted and the information contained therein be noted (Option 1).

No. 24 **EDUCATION DIRECTORATE – ALN REFORM UPDATE**

Consideration was given to the report of the Corporate Director Education.

The Corporate Director Education provided a comprehensive overview of the report which outlined the progress made against ALN reform and associated policy renewal.

The Executive Member for Education welcomed the report and noted the amount of work undertaken to ensure the Council was on track to deliver the actions.

RESOLVED that the report be accepted and associated documentation and proposed course of action (Option 1).

MONITORING ITEM - SOCIAL SERVICES

No. 25 **REGIONAL PARTNERSHIP UPDATE**

Consideration was given to the report of the Corporate Director Social Services.

The Head of Children’s Service provided an overview of the work and decisions taken over the last 6 months by the Regional Partnership Board.

RESOLVED that the report be accepted and the Executive Committee supported the decisions of the Regional Partnership Board (Option 1).

MONITORING ITEM – CORPORATE SERVICES

No. 25 CCTV DELIVERY MODEL PROPOSALS

Having regard to the views expressed by the Proper Officer regarding the public interest test, that on balance the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighed the public interest in disclosing the information and that the report should be exempt.

RESOLVED that the public be excluded whilst this item of business is transacted as it is likely there would be a disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 14, Part 1, Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act, 1972 (as amended).

Consideration was given to the joint report of the Chief Officer Commercial and Customer and Chief Officer Resources (SIRO CCTV).

The Chief Officer Commercial and Customer provided an overview of the report and outlined the key points as noted in the report.

In response to a question, the Chief Officer informed the Executive Committee of discussions at the Corporate Overview Scrutiny Committee.

The Leader and the Executive welcomed the report and the partnership working with the Police would be beneficial. The Member further wished to extend thanks to the Chief Officer Commercial and Customer along with her Team for the work achieved on this project.

RESOLVED that the report be accepted and the information which contained details relating to the business/financial affairs of persons other than the Authority be accepted. (Option 1).
